AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1-18 (Cancelled).

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): An image formation system formed with at least two units of digital copying machines connected to each other and in which a plurality of the connected digital copying machines can share and execute one job, wherein

each of the digital copying machines has a link copy function that a document is set in one of digital copying machines and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, and

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine interrupts the printer operation to start the copy operation based on the link copy function,

wherein each of the digital copying machines comprises a memory unit connected to a system controller via a system bus and configured to store a data of the document locally in the digital copying machine, said unit comprising:

a compression unit, configured to compress said data;

a storage unit, configured to store said compressed data received from said compression unit via a local bus in said memory unit and not via said system bus, wherein said memory unit further comprises:

at least two storage units;

at least two local buses; and

at least two compression units; said compression units are able to perform a compression and decompression of said data, said storage units being directly connected to said compression units corresponding thereto with said local buses, allowing an external device to perform a parallel data storage and data retrieval from said memory unit.

Claim 20 (Original): The image formation system according to claim 19, wherein each of said digital copying machines outputs images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

Claim 21 (Original): The image formation system according to claim 19, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are directly connected to each other.

Claim 22 (Original): The image formation system according to claim 19, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are connected to each other through a network.

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): An image formation system formed with at least two units of digital copying machines connected to each other and in which a plurality of the connected digital copying machines can share and execute one job, wherein

each of the digital copying machines has a link copy function that a document is set in one of digital copying machines and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, and

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying

machine waits until the printer operation is finished and starts the copy operation based on the link copy function after the printer operation is finished,

wherein each of the digital copying machines comprises a memory unit connected to a system controller via a system bus and configured to store a data of the document locally in the digital copying machine, said unit comprising:

a compression unit, configured to compress said data;

a storage unit, configured to store said compressed data received from said compression unit via a local bus in said memory unit and not via said system bus, wherein said memory unit further comprises:

at least two storage units;

at least two local buses; and

at least two compression units; said compression units are able to perform a compression and decompression of said data, said storage units being directly connected to said compression units corresponding thereto with said local buses, allowing an external device to perform a parallel data storage and data retrieval from said memory unit.

Claim 24 (Original): The image formation system according to claim 23, wherein each of said digital copying machines outputs images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

Claim 25 (Original): The image formation system according to claim 23, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are directly connected to each other.

Claim 26 (Original): The image formation system according to claim 23, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are connected to each other through a network.

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): An image formation system formed with at least two units of digital copying machines connected to each other and in which a plurality of the connected digital copying machines can share and execute one job, wherein

each of the digital copying machines has a link copy function that a document is set in one of digital copying machines and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, and

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine displays a message to the effect that the printer is operating and also a menu screen used to instruct a following operation to be executed, and

when Interrupt is selected in the menu screen, the digital copying machine interrupts the printer operation to start the copy operation based on the link copy function; when Wait is selected, the digital copying machine waits until the printer operation is finished and starts the copy operation based on the link copy function after the printer operation is finished; and when Cancel is selected, the digital copying machine cancels the copy operation based on the link copy function,

wherein each of the digital copying machines comprises a memory unit connected to a system controller via a system bus and configured to store a data of the document locally in the digital copying machine, said unit comprising:

a compression unit, configured to compress said data;

a storage unit, configured to store said compressed data received from said compression unit via a local bus in said memory unit and not via said system bus, wherein said memory unit further comprises:

at least two storage units;

at least two local buses; and

at least two compression units; said compression units are able to perform a compression and decompression of said data, said storage units being directly connected to said compression units corresponding thereto with said local buses, allowing an external device to perform a parallel data storage and data retrieval from said memory unit.

Claim 28 (Original): The image formation system according to claim 27, wherein each of said digital copying machines outputs images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

Claim 29 (Original): The image formation system according to claim 27, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are directly connected to each other.

Claim 30 (Original): The image formation system according to claim 27, wherein at least two units of said digital copying machines are connected to each other through a network.

Claim 31 (Original): The image formation system according to claim 27, wherein the digital copying machine dismisses the menu screen to start the copy operation based on the link copy function when the printer operation according to the print request from the outside has ended during displaying of the menu screen.

Claim 32 (Currently Amended): A digital copying machine connected to at least another one of digital copying machines with which data communications can be performed, said digital copying machine having:

a link copy function that a document is set in the machine itself or another digital copying machine and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, wherein,

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine interrupts the printer operation to start the copy operation based on the link copy function,

wherein each of the digital copying machines comprises a memory unit connected to a system controller via a system bus and configured to store a data of the document locally in the digital copying machine, said unit comprising:

a compression unit, configured to compress said data;

a storage unit, configured to store said compressed data received from said compression unit via a local bus in said memory unit and not via said system bus, wherein said memory unit further comprises:

at least two storage units;

at least two local buses; and

at least two compression units; said compression units are able to perform a compression and decompression of said data, said storage units being directly connected to said compression units corresponding thereto with said local buses, allowing an external device to perform a parallel data storage and data retrieval from said memory unit.

Claim 33 (Original): The digital copying machine according to claim 32, said digital copying machine outputting images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

Claim 34 (Original): The digital copying machine according to claim 32, said digital copying machine directly connected to at least another one of said digital copying machines.

Claim 35 (Original): The digital copying machine according to claim 32, said digital copying machine connected to at least another one of said digital copying machines through a network.

Claim 36 (Currently Amended): A digital copying machine connected to at least another one of digital copying machines with which data communications can be performed, said digital copying machine having:

a link copy function that a document is set in the machine itself or another digital copying machine and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, wherein,

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine waits until the printer operation is finished and starts the copy operation based on the link copy function after the printer operation is finished,

wherein each of the digital copying machines comprises a memory unit connected to a system controller via a system bus and configured to store a data of the document locally in the digital copying machine, said unit comprising:

a compression unit, configured to compress said data;

a storage unit, configured to store said compressed data received from said compression unit via a local bus in said memory unit and not via said system bus, wherein said memory unit further comprises:

at least two storage units;

at least two local buses; and

at least two compression units; said compression units are able to perform a compression and decompression of said data, said storage units being directly connected to said compression units corresponding thereto with said local buses, allowing an external device to perform a parallel data storage and data retrieval from said memory unit.

Claim 37 (Original): The digital copying machine according to claim 36, said digital copying machine outputting images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

Claim 38 (Original): The digital copying machine according to claim 36, said digital copying machine directly connected to at least another one of said digital copying machines.

Claim 39 (Original): The digital copying machine according to claim 36, said digital copying machine connected to at least another one of said digital copying machines through a network.

Claim 40 (Currently Amended): A digital copying machine connected to at least another one of digital copying machines with which data communications can be performed, said digital copying machine having:

a link copy function that a document is set in the machine itself or another digital copying machine and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, wherein,

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine displays a message to the effect that the printer is operating and also a menu screen used to instruct a following operation to be executed, and

when Interrupt is selected in the menu screen, the digital copying machine interrupts the printer operation to start the copy operation based on the link copy function; when Wait is selected, the digital copying machine waits until the printer operation is finished and starts the copy operation based on the link copy function after the printer operation is finished; and when Cancel is selected, the digital copying machine cancels the copy operation based on the link copy function,

wherein each of the digital copying machines comprises a memory unit connected to a system controller via a system bus and configured to store a data of the document locally in the digital copying machine, said unit comprising:

a compression unit, configured to compress said data;

a storage unit, configured to store said compressed data received from said compression unit via a local bus in said memory unit and not via said system bus, wherein said memory unit further comprises:

at least two storage units;

at least two local buses; and

at least two compression units; said compression units are able to perform a compression and decompression of said data, said storage units being directly connected to

said compression units corresponding thereto with said local buses, allowing an external device to perform a parallel data storage and data retrieval from said memory unit.

Claim 41 (Original): The digital copying machine according to claim 40, said digital copying machine outputting images printed by printer operation and images printed by copy operation based on the link copy function to different paper output sections.

Claim 42 (Original): The digital copying machine according to claim 40, said digital copying machine directly connected to at least another one of said digital copying machines.

Claim 43 (Original): The digital copying machine according to claim 40, said digital copying machine connected to at least another one of said digital copying machines through a network.

Claim 44 (Original): The digital copying machine according to claim 40 which dismisses the menu screen to start the copy operation based on the link copy function when the printer operation according to the print request from the outside has ended during displaying of the menu screen.

Claim 45-82 (Cancelled).

Claim 83 (New): An image formation system formed with at least two units of digital copying machines connected to each other and in which a plurality of the connected digital copying machines can share and execute one job, wherein

each of the digital copying machines has a link copy function that a document is set in one of digital copying machines and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, and

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine interrupts the printer operation to start the copy operation based on the link copy function,

wherein each of the digital copying machines comprises a memory unit connected to a system controller via a system bus and configured to store a data of the document locally in the digital copying machine, said unit comprising:

a compression unit, configured to compress said data;

a storage unit, configured to store said compressed data received from said compression unit via a local bus in said memory unit and not via said system bus, wherein said memory unit further comprises an image synthesis section, wherein said data and a data already stored in said storage unit can be synthesized.

Claim 84 (New): An image formation system formed with at least two units of digital copying machines connected to each other and in which a plurality of the connected digital copying machines can share and execute one job, wherein

each of the digital copying machines has a link copy function that a document is set in one of digital copying machines and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, and

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine waits until the printer operation is finished and starts the copy operation based on the link copy function after the printer operation is finished,

wherein each of the digital copying machines comprises a memory unit connected to a system controller via a system bus and configured to store a data of the document locally in the digital copying machine, said unit comprising:

a compression unit, configured to compress said data;

a storage unit, configured to store said compressed data received from said compression unit via a local bus in said memory unit and not via said system bus, wherein said memory unit further comprises an image synthesis section, wherein said data and a data already stored in said storage unit can be synthesized.

Claim 85 (New): An image formation system formed with at least two units of digital copying machines connected to each other and in which a plurality of the connected digital copying machines can share and execute one job, wherein

each of the digital copying machines has a link copy function that a document is set in one of digital copying machines and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, and

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine displays a message to the effect that the printer is operating and also a menu screen used to instruct a following operation to be executed, and

when Interrupt is selected in the menu screen, the digital copying machine interrupts the printer operation to start the copy operation based on the link copy function; when Wait is selected, the digital copying machine waits until the printer operation is finished and starts the copy operation based on the link copy function after the printer operation is finished; and when Cancel is selected, the digital copying machine cancels the copy operation based on the link copy function,

wherein each of the digital copying machines comprises a memory unit connected to a system controller via a system bus and configured to store a data of the document locally in the digital copying machine, said unit comprising:

a compression unit, configured to compress said data;

a storage unit, configured to store said compressed data received from said compression unit via a local bus in said memory unit and not via said system bus, wherein said memory unit further comprises an image synthesis section, wherein said data and a data already stored in said storage unit can be synthesized.

Claim 86 (New): A digital copying machine connected to at least another one of digital copying machines with which data communications can be performed, said digital copying machine having:

a link copy function that a document is set in the machine itself or another digital copying machine and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, wherein,

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying

machine interrupts the printer operation to start the copy operation based on the link copy function,

wherein each of the digital copying machines comprises a memory unit connected to a system controller via a system bus and configured to store a data of the document locally in the digital copying machine, said unit comprising:

a compression unit, configured to compress said data;

a storage unit, configured to store said compressed data received from said compression unit via a local bus in said memory unit and not via said system bus, wherein said memory unit further comprises an image synthesis section, wherein said data and a data already stored in said storage unit can be synthesized.

Claim 87 (New): A digital copying machine connected to at least another one of digital copying machines with which data communications can be performed, said digital copying machine having:

a link copy function that a document is set in the machine itself or another digital copying machine and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, wherein,

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine waits until the printer operation is finished and starts the copy operation based on the link copy function after the printer operation is finished,

wherein each of the digital copying machines comprises a memory unit connected to a system controller via a system bus and configured to store a data of the document locally in the digital copying machine, said unit comprising:

a compression unit, configured to compress said data;

a storage unit, configured to store said compressed data received from said compression unit via a local bus in said memory unit and not via said system bus, wherein said memory unit further comprises an image synthesis section, wherein said data and a data already stored in said storage unit can be synthesized.

Claim 88 (New): A digital copying machine connected to at least another one of digital copying machines with which data communications can be performed, said digital copying machine having:

a link copy function that a document is set in the machine itself or another digital copying machine and at least two units of the digital copying machines share the job of executing copy operation on said document, and a printer function of printing according to a print request from the outside, wherein,

when the start of copy operation based on the link copy function is instructed during the printer operation according to the print request from the outside, the digital copying machine displays a message to the effect that the printer is operating and also a menu screen used to instruct a following operation to be executed, and

when Interrupt is selected in the menu screen, the digital copying machine interrupts the printer operation to start the copy operation based on the link copy function; when Wait is selected, the digital copying machine waits until the printer operation is finished and starts the copy operation based on the link copy function after the printer operation is finished; and when Cancel is selected, the digital copying machine cancels the copy operation based on the link copy function,

wherein each of the digital copying machines comprises a memory unit connected to a system controller via a system bus and configured to store a data of the document locally in the digital copying machine, said unit comprising:

a compression unit, configured to compress said data;

a storage unit, configured to store said compressed data received from said compression unit via a local bus in said memory unit and not via said system bus, wherein said memory unit further comprises an image synthesis section, wherein said data and a data already stored in said storage unit can be synthesized.